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**MINUTES OF THE
REGULAR MEETING OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION
CITY OF EDINA, MINNESOTA
CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS
SEPTEMBER 9, 2015
7:00 PM**

I. CALL TO ORDER

II. ROLL CALL

Answering the roll call were: Hobbs, Lee, Strauss, Thorsen, Ma, Kivimaki, Nemerov, Carr, Forrest and Platteter

Absent: Olsen

Chair Platteter welcomed new Edina High School student members Amy Ma and Peter Kivimaki.

III. APPROVAL OF MEETING AGENDA

Commissioner Thorsen moved approval of the September 9, 2015, meeting agenda. Commissioner Strauss seconded the motion. All voted aye; motion carried.

IV. APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA

Commissioner Thorsen moved approval of August 26, 2015 meeting minutes. Commissioner Lee seconded the motion. All voted aye; motion carried.

V. COMMUNITY COMMENT:

None

VI. PUBLIC HEARINGS

A. Preliminary Plat for Eldridge 8th Addition. Ridge Creek Custom Homes. 6029 Crest Lane, Edina, MN

Planner Presentation

Planner Teague reported that Ridge Creek Custom Homes on behalf of Sharon and Lee Harrison is proposing to subdivide the property at 6209 Crest Lane into two lots. The existing home would be torn down, and two new homes built on the new lots. Both lots would gain access off Crest Lane. To accommodate the request the following is required: a subdivision; and lot width variances from 126 feet to 108 feet for each lot.

Continuing, Teague explained that within this neighborhood, the median lot area is 22,278 square feet, median lot depth is 176 feet, and the median lot width is 126. This is a neighborhood with varying lot sizes. The largest lots are closest to the subject property. The resulting lots would still be larger than most lots in the neighborhood. The narrow lots are located at the perimeter of the 500 foot neighborhood. The proposed subdivision would re-establish the original plat of Valley View Heights. When these lots were platted, they met the lot width requirement which was 75 feet at the time.

Planner Teague concluded that staff recommends that the City Council approve the proposed two lot subdivision of 6209 Crest Lane with lot width variances from 126-feet to 108-feet for each lot based on the following findings:

1. Except for the lot width variances, the proposal meets the required standards and ordinance for a subdivision.
2. The proposal is consistent with the existing lot sizes on Crest Lane.
3. The proposal restores the lot to the way it was originally platted as two lots in the Valley View Heights Plat.
4. The proposed lots were code compliant when they were originally platted. A 108-foot wide lot is wider than the general standard required width of 75 feet.
5. The 27,000+ square foot lots are larger than the general standard minimum lot area of 9,000 square feet.
5. The proposal meets the required standards for a variance, because:
 - a. The practical difficulty is caused by previous property owner that combined two lots into one, after the original plat. The result is that this lot and the lot to the north are twice as large as the others on this block. This property was originally platted as two lots, and at that time the lots were code compliant. The cities lot width requirement has since changed.
 - b. The requested variances are reasonable in the context of the immediate neighborhood and original plat.
 - c. The proposed subdivision would result in two lots more characteristic of the neighborhood.
 - d. The variances would meet the intent of the ordinance because the proposed lots are of similar size to others in the neighborhood on Crest Lane.
 - e. If the variances were denied, the applicant would be denied a use of his property, a 108-foot wide, 27,000+ square foot lot, which is common to the area.

Approval is also subject to the following conditions:

1. The City must approve the final plat within one year of preliminary approval or receive a written application for a time extension or the preliminary approval will be void.
2. Park dedication fee of \$5,000 must be paid prior to release of the final plat.
3. Compliance with the conditions required by the engineering memo dated September 2, 2015.
5. Prior to issuance of a building permit, the following items must be submitted:
 - a. Submit evidence of Nine Mile Creek Watershed District approval. The City may require revisions to the preliminary plat to meet the district's requirements.
 - b. A curb-cut permit must be obtained from the Edina engineering department.
 - c. A grading plan subject to review and approval of the city engineer.
 - d. A construction management plan will be required for the construction of the new homes.
 - e. Utility hook-ups are subject to review of the city engineer.

Appearing for the Applicant

Rob Eldridge, Ridge Creek Custom Homes

Discussion

Commissioner Carr questioned the reason for eliminating the \$5,000 Parkland Dedication fee. Planner Teague explained through research he found that the subject property was originally platted as two lots and at the time of platting two Parkland Dedication fees were paid. Teague commented that in his opinion Parkland Dedication shouldn't be paid twice.

Commissioner Forrest said she is concerned with some of the comments from the City Engineer on the limited retention capacity downstream and the rate of flow and how that would be handled. Planner Teague responded that in speaking with Engineering officials they expressed confidence that the site can be properly drained through measures implemented to hold the water on the site as long as possible before it is released. He said at this time since there are no specific house plans storm water management hasn't been finalized. Teague said the goal is to drain the site toward the front; not south; reiterating it can be accomplished correctly.

Commissioner Lee commented that the Code looks at subdivisions through size, adding while the lots created are very large and are in character with the size of lots within the 500-foot neighborhood if two story houses are built on these lots the neighborhood character would be changed. She pointed out this neighborhood is comprised of midcentury modern rambler style homes; not modern two story homes. Continuing, Lee said with the removal of the existing home and the construction of two new homes significant tree loss would occur to

accommodate the new homes and driveway(s). Lee stated the loss of the tree canopy would also significantly impact neighborhood character. She concluded; if approved, attention should be paid to the driveway(s) and reducing its footprint.

Commissioner Carr commented as she views the lot configurations it appears with cul de sac developments lot widths could be compromised because of the unusual shape of the lots 50-feet back. Teague agreed, adding the lots in question are not “grid” lots; lot width can be large or small due to the arc of the cul de sac; creating unusual lot configurations.

Applicant Presentation

Mr. Eldridge addressed the Commission and explained he recently received the City Engineers memo and believes a solution can be found by draining the site(s) to the front. Eldridge explained they need to work with the existing conditions of the site; acknowledging that the existing driveway is very large, adding he would focus on reducing that width thereby reducing the hard cover.

Continuing, Eldridge said with regard to the variance the difficulty lies in the unique shapes of some cul de sac lots. He pointed out the original platter intended this property to be two separate lots. He also asked the Commission to note both the lot area and lot depth are much larger than the neighborhood average.

Concluding, Eldridge said in his opinion the character of the neighborhood would not be negatively impacted. He noted at present there is one long Rambler at the end of a cul-de-sac and if approved there will be two new properties with lots much closer in size to the other lots that surround it. Eldridge presented to Commissioners graphics of lots in the neighborhood.

Commissioner Lee asked the applicant if the homes would be constructed in the “tuck-under” fashion. Eldridge responded he intends to build two traditional two story homes with a walk out level. He did acknowledge interest is rising again for Rambler style homes. Lee stated in her opinion the different housing styles are what make Edina, Edina. She said “better” is not building the “same” two story home everywhere. Lee concluded she has a real concern that certain housing styles such as Ramblers are disappearing.

Commissioner Forrest suggested that everything that could be done should be done to minimize tree loss in the rear. Mr. Eldridge responded that their goal is to remove buckthorn and retain as many large trees as possible.

Public Hearing

Chair Platteter opened the public hearing.

The following residents expressed concerns over the proposal as submitted:

Jeff Mandel, 6204 Westridge Boulevard
David Strand, 6236 Crest Lane

Chair Platteter asked if anyone else would like to speak to the issue; being none, Commissioner Thorsen moved to close the public hearing. Commissioner Strauss seconded the motion. All voted aye; motion carried.

Discussion

A discussion ensued on the lot width variance attached to the subdivision request. It was acknowledged that the lots being created are large and if not for the lot width variance met all other City requirements.

The Commission was divided in their opinion on if cul de sac lots create practical difficulties that would support approval of the subdivision/variance. Discussion continued on the storm water management for the lot(s) and if the Commission had enough information from the staff to make a decision. Those Commissioners who expressed their support for the project said they understood Engineering has some reservations; however, those issues could be resolved.

The discussion continued with the following comments shared:

- Look at the neighborhood aesthetics; not only lot size and lot dimensions in the decision making process.
- The variance needed is because of the lot configuration itself.
- There are no practical difficulties to support a lot width variance
- If approved minimize building height and add architectural interest to the homes.
- Because of the topography if approved storm water management needs to be routinely monitored.
- Although the lot is large the usable area isn't.
- Keep the code simple.
- If approved minimize tree loss and respect the newly adopted tree ordinance.
- If approved special attention must be paid to hard cover; especially driveway impact on water runoff and tree loss.

- Acknowledge that the creation of an additional lot can provide new homes for new families to the City of Edina.

Motion

Commissioner Carr moved to recommend subdivision approval based on staff findings and subject to staff conditions. Commissioner Thorsen seconded the motion. Carr said approval is also conditioned on removal of the Parkland Dedication fee.

Commissioner Lee said she has difficulty with 5. a. that the original platting of the lot as two is a practical difficulty and would like it removed. Planner Teague suggested that that sentence be removed from practical difficulty and added as a Finding. The findings for the variance would include that the property was originally platted as two lots, and at that time the lots were code compliant.

Chair Platteter called for the vote; Ayes; Thorsen, Strauss, Carr, Platteter. Nays; Hobbs, Lee, Nemerov, Forrest. Motion failed 4-4.

VII. REPORTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A. 2016 Work Plan

Chair Platteter introduced the 2016 Work Plan and asked Planner Teague for a summary.

Planner Teague reported that the 2016 Work Plan is complete; however, he said for 2016 he envisions the Commission continuing their work on the Greater Southdale Area Plan. He noted the Council has given the approval to proceed with the process and engage a consultant. Teague further noted that the Small Area Plan for Cahill and 70th would be on hold; however, could be addressed during the Comprehensive Plan process.

Planner Teague told the Commission a large part of the 2016 Work Plan will be focused on beginning the updating of the Comprehensive Plan. Commissioner Lee asked if that process would include a small committee of Commissioners. Chair Platteter responded that he believes a small core group of Commissioners would initially be formed. Commissioner Forrest agreed and further commented that she was present during the last update and if she remembers correctly four (4) Commissioners made up the initial work group. Planner Teague agreed,

adding at first a small core group is formed and as the City gets closer to finalizing the plan more Commissioners are involved; public meetings are held etc.

Chair Platteter suggested that Planner Teague share with Commissioners a summary of the original Comp Plan updating process and steps included in that lengthy process. Teague responded he would draft a summary of the previous process and share with Commissioners.

Continuing, Planner Teague said a number of zoning items remain on the work plan to include signs, lighting and parking. Platteter agreed and added if Commissioners feel other items need to be addressed to e-mail Teague with their item of interest. Concluding, Teague said staff continues to monitor the residential redevelopment process and that would occur throughout 2016. Teague further noted that an "item" (Taprooms) for review; amending the Zoning Ordinance recently "cropped up", adding he would be forwarding that amendment to the Commission for their September 30th meeting and review.

Chair Platteter thanked Planner Teague for his comments and said it appears the Commission will be very busy in 2016.

VIII. CORRESPONDENCE AND PETITIONS

Chair Platteter acknowledged back of packet materials.

IX. CHAIR AND COMMISSION COMMENTS

Commissioner Forrest said she would like to remind Commissioners that the Edina Historical House Tour is on Sunday (Sept 13) from 1-5 pm. Contact the Edina Historical Society for details.

Commissioner Strauss reminded the Commission that on Monday, September 14 there will be an Urban Workshop from 8-10 am at the Edina Country Club. Strauss said it sounds like a good program with an interesting guest speaker

Commissioner Lee noted Commissioners received a letter from home owners at 4236 Crocker and questioned if this is an item for information or comment. Chair Platteter said he believes the letter is informational. He said the Planning Commission wasn't involved; however, changes have been made to the code to address concerns mentioned in the letter. Teague said he would be willing to put together a list of implemented changes to date.

Commissioner Hobbs said the Greater Southdale Area Plan Work Group is proceeding with four additional members. Hobbs noted Commissioner Carr is one of the newly appointed members.

Chair Platteter thanked former student member Madison Seeley for her service on the Commission.

X. STAFF COMMENT

Planner Teague apprised Commissioners that the City Council provided feedback on the Best Buy Site. Teague said the Walgreens site is still in the loop along with a Sketch Plan for the Titus site.

Teague reported that the next meeting of the Planning Commission is on September 30th, not the 23rd due to conflict with a religious holiday. The meeting will also be held in the Community Room 2nd floor due to Chamber reconstruction.

XI. ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Thorsen moved adjournment at 8:50 pm. Commissioner Strauss seconded the motion. All voted aye; motion to adjourn carried.

Respectfully submitted